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MANAGEMENT COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

U. S. Department of Agriculture

A summary of significant events of
interest to USDA management

Issue #109
October, 1980

CONFLICT OF INTEREST REGULATIONS.....Beginning October 1, 1980, all contracts and purchase orders with former USDA employees must be approved by the Deputy Secretary, (Notice O&F-AS-20, September 5, 1980). This approval process was established at the request of Deputy Secretary Williams as means of avoiding potential conflict of interest situations. Agencies will be required to submit documentation necessary to demonstrate 1) that in-house capability was adequately considered and assessed prior to initiating the procurement action, 2) that the services or supplies are needed in terms of agency mission and established priorities, 3) that the contract with a former employee is necessary for the performance of the contract tasks, 4) that the competitive procurement procedures have been complied with to the extent required by applicable Federal procurement laws and regulations, and 5) that the laws relating to the procurement of personal services have been strictly complied with. (Contact: Doug Metzger, O&F, ext. 77527)

ALLOCATION OF EXECUTIVE POSITION AND NONCAREER APPOINTMENT AUTHORITY AUTHORIZATIONS FOR FY 1982 and 1983.....The Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 requires that in each even-numbered calendar year, each agency (1) examine its Senior Executive Service (SES) position needs, and (2) submit to the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) a written request for a specific number of SES position authorizations for each of the two succeeding fiscal years. This statute also requires that, in each calendar year, each agency (1) examine its needs for employment of SES noncareer appointees, and (2) submit to OPM a written request for authority to employ a specific number of SES noncareer appointees during the succeeding fiscal year. The biennial SES position authorization cycle is also an appropriate time for agencies to examine needs for GS-16-18 positions and for scientific/professional (ST) research and development positions authorized by 5 USC 3104. In response to an OPM Bulletin, memoranda were sent to all Agency Administrators, Staff Office Heads and personnel officers asking for agency requests for SES, GS, and ST position authorization for fiscal year 1982 and 1983 and all SES noncareer appointment authorities for FY 1982. All responses must be received in the Office of Personnel by November 14, 1980, to allow time for review by OP, concurrence by the Assistant Secretary for Administration, the appropriate Assistant Secretary or equivalent, the Deputy Secretary and the Secretary. (Contact: Earl Hadlock, OP, ext. 72830)

10-YEAR ENERGY CONSERVATION PLANS.....Department of Energy regulations require USDA to develop and implement long-range plans for the conservation of energy in its facilities and operations. These plans, and expansion of the USDA Energy Management Plan, will establish specific goals and time frames for reducing energy consumption as well as reducing our reliance on oil as a source of that energy. A preliminary 10-year Buildings Plan has been forwarded to DOE for their review and comment and efforts are underway to develop a comparable plan covering the general operations of the Department. Both plans being developed in conjunction with the agencies are scheduled for completion and incorporation in the USDA Energy Management Plan by February 1981. (Contact: Bill Roth, O&F, ext. 79215)

FY 1981 ENERGY CONSERVATION GOALS--AUTOMOTIVE FUELS.....The Department has made significant progress in the past year to reduce the use of automotive fuels. Although the fourth quarter data is not available, it appears that USDA will approach the reduced level of consumption desired by the President. No specific targets have been set by the White House, however, it is proposed that we continue this conservation objective by maintaining, in FY 1981, the level of consumption attained in FY 1980.

The FY 1981 targets will be based on total fuel consumption rather than mileage to provide a greater degree of management flexibility and to fully recognize gains made in increased vehicle efficiency. O&F will convert the FY 1980 mileage data for each agency to gallons of gasoline and diesel fuel consumed. This will then be the agency goal for FY 1981. Provisions will be made to recognize the impact of increased program activity. (Contact: Bill Roth, O&F, ext. 79215)

ENERGY CONSERVATION--DRIVER TRAINING.....The President has directed Federal agencies to work toward increasing the fuel efficiency of vehicles by 10 percent through improved maintenance, acquisition of more fuel efficient vehicles and the training of drivers in energy conserving driving techniques.

The Department has a total of 74,604 drivers within three categories:

Category A - Full-time vehicle operations, e.g., chauffeurs, bus and truck drivers	821
Category B - Employees who require a vehicle in the performance of their official duties and average more than 600 miles per month	42,796
Category C - Other employees who use a vehicle in their official duties on an intermittent basis	30,987

USDA is required to develop a plan for the training of these drivers based on a behind-the-wheel training program developed by DOE. This plan, currently in the developmental stage, will rely on the agencies to train their drivers. It is proposed that all Category A drivers and those Category B drivers who operate agency owned or leased vehicles be required to participate in a "behind-the-wheel" training activity. Comparable training for the POV drivers in Category C would be at the option of the agency.

A training film or slide tape presentation will be developed with required viewing by all drivers. To minimize any disruption of normal employee duties, the film could be made a part of the agenda for on-going agency meetings, conferences, regularly scheduled training activities, etc. (Contact: Bill Roth, O&F, ext. 79215)

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION HAS GONE BILINGUAL.....The Department's Public Participation Staff has published "How to Participate in USDA Decisionmaking" in Spanish. Copies are available from the Director of Public Participation, OBPE, room 118-A. (Contact: Linley Juers, OBPE, ext. 72113)

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT EVALUATION.....The Office of Personnel will conduct the following personnel management evaluations in FY 1981:

APHIS	October 20-23 November 2-7 November 12-19	Morristown, NJ Minneapolis, MN Headquarters
SEA	February 2-13	Beltsville
ASCS	March 30-April 3 April 13-17 April 27-May 1	MFO/KCCC, Kansas City, MO APFO, Salt Lake City, UT Headquarters
OIG	May 4-8 May 18-22 May 27-June 2	Temple, TX Atlanta, GA Headquarters

A number of follow-up visits to locations reviewed during FY 1980 will be made. OP is considering the agencies' suggestions concerning the scope and methodology for a proposed Departmental classification study of GS 14 and 15 positions. (Contact: Gloria Torres, OP, ext. 78629)

COMBINED FEDERAL CAMPAIGN (CFC).....The 1981 CFC began October 6 with an official kick off ceremony that doubled as a training session for over 400 key workers. Secretary Bergland is again serving as both governmentwide and USDA chairperson for the campaign. Acting Assistant Secretary for National Resources and Environment, Ned Bailey is Vice Chairman.

This year's campaign has been compressed into a tight eight weeks, requiring individual agency action plans and the meeting of agency goals in four to seven weeks. The USDA effort will officially end on November 28.

Departmental CFC Coordinator Al Colley (FS) says that "through careful planning and execution at the agency level, this year's campaign should be the most successful in the history of the Department. Agency coordinators and responsible managers should insure that each agency participates in carrying out these important action plans... if so, our success is guaranteed."

Both Al Colley and Dale Lewis, the Department's "Loaned Executive" from NASA can be reached at 755-8008.

GRADUATE SCHOOL NEWS.....The Graduate School schedule of 1981 winter quarter courses is now available.

Some of the new courses being offered are Productivity: A Management Problem; Great Decisions; Introduction to Technological Media (Audio-Visual Materials); Introduction to On-line Data Base Search Techniques; and Consumer Law.

Other subject areas of interest to USDA employees include procurement, public affairs, editing, computer science, management, accounting, journalism, communication, personnel administration and secretarial skills.

Mail registration ends December 17 and in-person registration will be January 5-10. (Contact: Graduate School, ext. 74419)

ACCOMODATIONS FOR THE PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED.....The Department is making significant progress in providing accomodations for the physically handicapped.

- A ramp was constructed to provide access into the patio of the Administration Building.
 - Abrasive floor finish materials were applied to the Administration Building west wing entrance.
 - The Independence Avenue entrance to the Administration Building between the center of the building and the west wing has been unlocked. This entrance has no steps and wheelchairs can be accomodated.
 - Ten parking spaces near handicapped entrances have been widened and identified. A space at each of the three handicapped entrances will be reserved for handicapped visitors.
 - Braille symbols have been applied to all elevators.
 - Fourteen restrooms in the South Building and seven in the Administration Building are now being remodeled for the handicapped.
 - Seven additional drinking fountains in the South Building are being lowered to wheelchair height. Five new wheelchair-height fountains are being installed in the Administration Building.
 - New microwave devices will be installed at existing handicapped entrances - South Building courts 2 and 5 and the Administration Building - to eliminate problems.
 - A combination ramp and wheelchair lift will be installed at the 14th Street entrance to the South Building.
 - A wheelchair lift has been purchased to assist handicapped persons to the stage of the Jefferson Auditorium.
 - New signs will be installed for handicapped facilities.
- (Contact: Dick Hadsell, O&F, ext. 75225)

GREEN BOOK IMPROVEMENTS.....In 1979, a Departmentwide task force reviewed Green Book costs and related procedures. The task force report issued in September of 1979 made several recommendations for improving the Green Book. These recommendations are now being implemented.

Highlights of the changes are:

- Information on Green book costs will be provided to the agencies and to OBP&E on a more timely basis,
- The size, cost and complexity of the Green book has been reduced, and
- A streamlined approach for approving and financing new programs has been adopted.

(Contact: Larry Wilson, O&F, ext. 77161)

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY REPORT.....The OEO Annual Report will be available for distribution through agency equal opportunity coordinators late this month. The report focuses on the status of minorities and women in USDA employment, aid to minority enterprises and minority participation in USDA programs. Although USDA still falls short of many overall goals, the direction of change in most areas is in a positive direction. Agency managers will find this information useful in identifying areas of emphasis in the days ahead. (Contact: James Frazier, OEO, ext. 74256)